

AFTER THE STORM

If The Power Goes Out...

KEEP YOUR COOL

Since hurricanes occur during the hottest time of the year in South Florida, heat exhaustion and other heat-related illnesses become a consideration when the power goes out and homes are without air conditioning. Problems can develop after several days of exposure to high temperatures and inadequate or unbalanced replacement of fluids. Here are some tips from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

- Drink cool, non-alcoholic, non-caffeinated beverages. If your doctor limits the amount of fluid you drink or you take water pills, ask how much you should drink when the weather is hot. Also, avoid extremely cold liquids because they can cause cramps.
- Rest.
- Take a cool shower, bath, or sponge bath.
- If possible, seek an air-conditioned environment such as a mall or public library, if they have power.
- Wear lightweight clothing.
- If possible, remain indoors during the heat of the day.
- Avoid strenuous activities.
- Signs of heat exhaustion may include heavy sweating, paleness, muscle cramps, tiredness, weakness, dizziness, headache, nausea or vomiting, fainting, cool and moist skin, fast and weak pulse rate, fast and shallow breathing. If you experience these symptoms, consider seeking medical attention.



USE RUNNING WATER SPARINGLY

During power outages, lift stations that normally pump raw sewage/wastewater may not be operating if they are not powered by a generator. Please restrict your use of running water as the system can eventually back up into your street, or showers, toilets, and sink drains inside your home.

DON'T DRINK THE WATER

Immediately following a hurricane, don't use tap water until you know it is safe. This includes not giving it to your pets, or using it for washing, cleaning, cooking, brushing your teeth, making ice or making formula. If a boil water order is issued for your area, follow these guidelines from the Florida Department of Health in Broward County:

- Boil water at a rolling boil for one minute to kill infectious organisms
- If you don't have power, you can mix 8 drops (1/8 teaspoon) of unscented household bleach per gallon of water and allow to stand for 30 minutes. If the water is cloudy, add 16 drops (1/4 teaspoon) and let stand for 30 minutes. The water will not be toxic, though it may have a chlorine odor and taste.
- If a boil water order is issued, remember that water system boundaries do not always correspond to city boundaries. Residents who are not sure of their water service provider should check their water bill or call their individual city.

OBSERVE CURFEWS

Listen to local radio and television stations for curfew announcements. Curfews are not unusual for communities that suffer a direct hit from a storm. Roads and highways may be blocked, and hidden dangers may exist after dark such as downed trees and power lines, especially in flooded areas. Law enforcement and emergency services may be strained. All residents and businesses are expected to follow curfew laws. Exemptions to this are essential personnel such as law enforcement, fire-rescue, hospital or other healthcare workers, emergency management and others involved in recovery efforts.

AFTER THE STORM

If The Power Goes Out...



Gas Safety Tips

- Evacuate immediately if you smell natural gas which has the odor of rotten eggs, or see a broken gas line. Ventilate the area by opening windows or opening a door. Do not light matches, turn on any light switches, or use the telephone.
- Call the gas company immediately from a telephone outside the home or business. TECO Energy/Peoples Gas crews are available to respond to natural gas emergencies. For 24-hour service, call 1-877-832-6747. If you are unable to contact your gas company, call 911.
- If you evacuate, do not turn off the gas supply at the main meter. Only emergency or utility personnel should turn this valve. If you choose to do so, you can turn off the gas for individual appliances.
- If you have difficulty re-lighting pilot lights, or if gas appliances have been exposed to flood waters, do not attempt to operate the appliance. Contact a plumber, qualified service contractor, or your gas company.



TELEPHONE / CELL PHONE TIPS

- Be patient. Expect delays in getting calls through because of the high demand.
- Use your phone only for necessary calls, leaving lines open for emergency calls.
- Your phone line may be inoperable if your phone equipment requires power. Plug a hardline phone (not cordless) directly into the phone jack to verify whether you have service.
- Use your cell phone to send text messages which often get through when voice calls won't.
- Use your cell phone car charger to charge your cell phone.

Quick Tip – Food Safety

Always keep a thermometer in your refrigerator. The temperature should read 41° Fahrenheit or below; any higher and bacteria may begin forming. Thawed food can usually be eaten if it is still “refrigerator cold”. However, you should discard any food that has been at room temperature for two hours or more, and any food that has an unusual odor, color, or texture.

Remember: *When in doubt, throw it out!*



Quick Tip – Garages

Know where the manual release lever for your electric garage door opener is located, and know how to use it in the event of a power outage.

Always carry a house key if the garage is the primary means of entering your home, in case the garage door will not open.